



The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ

Vol. XXXVI

May 10, 2020

No. 18

Confidence Corner *John F. Board*

In this week's Confidence Corner we want to consider, in as much as our limited human minds can entertain, the concept of the holiness of God. In order to begin, we must examine three Hebrew words—not simply one. The three words we will look at together are *qodesh* (holiness), *cherem* (ban, devoted thing, destruction), and *chol* (common, profaneness). Please note that in providing the English translations I am not claiming that such is the full meaning of the terms. As a matter of fact, none of these translations are adequate for the Hebrew words examined. Yet nonetheless, in order to understand the concept of the holiness of God, each of these words must be examined briefly. We will look at one of the words each week for three weeks.

Qodesh is perhaps from the Babylonian *quddushu* which the many say is equivalent to *ellu* (bright). Additionally, some see the meaning of "to be separated." Why the confusion? Perhaps when fully understood the confusion can be alleviated.

Why has the Akkadian *quddushu* often been given the meaning of bright? The word *quddushu* is found from the time of Hammurabi 1750 B.C. It is also found in the time of Nebuchadrezzar where it is associated the ideogram (a graphic symbol that represents an idea or concept...for example today is an easily recognized ideogram) for god (*ilu/AN*). In addition, going back beyond Akkadian to Sumerian, there was also an ideogram employed for the root *q-d-sh* that was used to depict the sun.

So how does this association with gods and the sun come into play? While *quddushu* is often seemingly associated with *ellu* in texts, it was only so because when it was used, *quddushu* (to be separate), it was used of gods, but those gods were always associated with heavenly bodies. The association with the heavenly bodies is where the association with *ellu* (brightness) comes into play. It was not that *quddushu* itself meant bright, but it was natural for *quddushu* and *ellu* to be used interchangeably due to the association the Mesopotamian gods had with the heavenly lights.

The idea of separation then becomes the meaning behind *quodesh* as we trace the etymology of the word. As we will see as we continue our study in the coming weeks, this separation of God, as holy, deals with the distinction of God from man as the "Wholly Other."

jfb

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

Proverbs 31:30



**Happy
Mother's
Day!**

Sunday's Sermon on Facebook Live

10:30am

A.M. — A GIFT FOR MOM

John 19:26-27

GOD'S WORD-PROPHECY

If there's *anything* clear about Jesus' teachings in the Gospels, it's that He clearly believed that the Old Testament was God's Word. This conviction runs throughout all of His teachings, and He bases His self-understanding on it. Additionally, God's Word makes claims in the New Testament regarding inspiration (See 1 Cor. 1-3; 2 Tim. 3:16ff: etc.) The evidence for the lordship of Christ is also a very compelling reason for accepting the New Testament as God's Word. There are quite a few arguments to indicate the Bible is God's Word. Let me provide a few examples regarding one of the arguments—the argument from prophecy.

First, the Bible contains a good deal of fulfilled prophetic material that is explainable only on the supposition that this book is God's Word. For example, running throughout the Old Testament narrative are prophecies about the coming Christ, predictions that become fulfilled in the New Testament. Thus, to give but a few examples, the Old Testament foretells His place of birth as Bethlehem (Num. 24:17, 19; Mic. 5:2, and others); His lineage from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David (Gen. 12:3; 21:12; 2 Sam. 7:13); His forerunner, John the Baptist (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1); His vicarious suffering and death (Isa. 53); His crucifixion, before crucifixion was a mode of execution (Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10); His execution with common criminals (Isa. 53:9, 12); and His divinity (Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Mic. 5:2; etc.). How is this to be explained? It surely is not fair to chalk it up to chance.

What is more, there are many other fulfilled prophecies on other matters in Scripture. Consider the following example: The city of Tyre was a thriving seaport in the time of Ezekiel (around 580 BC). By inspiration, Ezekiel prophesies several things about this seaport that one couldn't have possibly just known at the time by looking at it. He predicts that Nebuchadnezzar II, a Babylonian king, would overthrow the city (Ezek. 26:8), which was, after a 13-year siege, eventually fulfilled.

Ezekiel even says that the debris from this city would be pushed into the sea (26:12). What an odd prediction to make about any area, let alone a thriving metropolis like Tyre. But several hundred years after this prophecy, it was fulfilled in detail. Alexander the Great laid siege to the city. The inhabitants fled to an island just off the coast (which was part of their territory). Alexander couldn't invade it with a naval fleet, so he pushed the debris of the city into the sea to form a causeway to it! That's part of the reason it got so flat! Today where the ancient city used to be, there are simply some small fishing villages where fishermen, as predicted, hang out their nets to dry on the flat rocks. The city itself is somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea!

Above are simply a few examples of prophecy that supports the concept that the Bible is God's Word. The space of the volumes of books would be needed to record even most of the prophecies that originated with God. Does this not suggest that more than human authorship is at work here?

John F Board

Elizabethtown, KY